

What's this lesson all about?

Advertising is all around us, so much so that it can be hidden in plain sight. When we get in the car and listen to the radio, we hear ads. When we switch on the TV, we see commercials. Look around: ads are everywhere the eye can see. This lesson will explore how food advertising can influence what we crave and why that matters.

LET'S START WITH VOCAB

Media: Media is the plural form of *medium* — which refers to any particular mode of communication. Radio broadcasting, television, music, movies, books, newspapers, advertising, and photography are all forms of media.

Advertising: Promotion of a product or service. The goal of advertising is to reach the people most likely to engage with and purchase a product or service.



WHO DECIDES WHAT WE CRAVE?

Advertising is Everywhere

- On billboards, benches, TV, radio, buses, most websites, even video games.

\$2 Billion a Year

- Is how much money the food and beverage industry spends every year to advertise their products to children.
- Advertising companies use scientific strategies to change what we crave in early childhood in order to create lifelong customers

Biggest Spenders of 2019

- McDonald's (\$624 Million)
- Domino's (\$467 Million)
- Taco Bell (\$383 Million)
- Burger King (\$372 Million)

The Science

- Ads are formulated to trigger the striatum: a reward-seeking section in our brain.
- Most food advertisements show images of happy people, happy colors, and happy sounds. Over time, we begin to make a connection between that depicted happiness and the food advertised.
- This entire process happens subconsciously—can you believe?!

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Food Habits Start Early

- Our food preferences form as early as two years old.
- These preferences carry with us into adulthood—whether they're healthy or unhealthy.
- Though we can change our food habits later on, it is often difficult.

Healthy Foods Don't Get the Same Air Time

- Commercials that promote healthy foods make up less than 3% of all food advertisements.
- Disproportionately targets children of color: A report from the University of Connecticut Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity showed that Black and Hispanic viewers were even less likely to see healthy food advertisements with only 1% of all food advertising being for healthier options.
- Studies show that young kids can even develop cravings for foods they've *never* had when exposed to persuasive advertising.

The Next Generation

- The foods we consume and the habits we develop get passed down to our children. These habits and food choices are heavily influenced by what is available in our neighborhoods and the ways in which we are taught about food— whether that be through advertising, or in our kitchens.

STILL CURIOUS?

WATCH: Food commercials have a tricky way of getting us to develop our appetites. First, watch a short clip of some behind-the-scenes footage of food advertising.

Next, watch the magic in action. What did you find appealing about the food shown in these commercials?

- Watch this behind-the-scenes footage: [How Food Commercials Are Made](#)
- Now see it in action: [Power Crunch Bar](#)

READ: There are many ways in which food media are designed to make us crave their food, most even take that a step further and target specific audiences. Here are some resources that explore how, why, and to who food is advertised:

- [How Can Advertisements Influence Your Food Decisions?](#)
- [How Fast Food Advertisements Get Under Your Skin](#)
- [How Children Develop Unhealthy Food Preferences](#)
- [Junk Food Ads Disproportionately Target Black and Hispanic Kids](#)

LET'S EXPERIMENT!

Create Your own Food Advertisement:

It's YOUR turn to sell food to your classmates. Pick your favorite family recipe and either make it and take a picture, or draw it! Use some of the techniques we've learned to create an advertisement that will persuade your friends, family, or classmates to crave your dish.

Here's an example:

Mama's "hold the egg"

Egg Salad Sandwich



A vegan & PROTEIN-PACKED
take on a classic American dish

No cooking. No mess. No hassle.

- 1) **Who** is the target audience?
 - Vegans or anyone that likes egg salad sandwiches.
 - Busy parents in need of a quick meal idea.
- 2) **What** emotion are *they* selling?
 - Nostalgia
- 3) **How** does this advertisement make *you* feel? Why?
 - This advertisement makes me miss my mom's cooking because it reminds me of hanging out in the kitchen with her.